

NOVEMBER 15, 2001

**SCHAKOWSKY PARTICIPATES IN BRIEFING ORGANIZED BY WAXMAN ON
BIOLOGICAL WEAPONS CONVENTION**

WASHINGTON, D.C. - U.S. Representative Jan Schakowsky (D-IL) today participated in a briefing organized by U.S. Representative Henry Waxman (D-CA) on the Biological Weapons Convention. Currently, the Bush Administration opposes the establishment of a new inspection regime under the 1972 Biological Weapons Convention. The September 11th terrorist and anthrax attacks have renewed calls by many experts and public officials for mandatory inspections under the Biological Weapons Convention.

Members were briefed by Douglas J. MacEachin with Harvard University's John F. Kennedy School of Government and former Deputy Director of intelligence at the Central Intelligence Agency, and Elisa D. Harris, former Director for nonproliferation and Export Controls at the National Security Council.

Below is Schakowsky's statement.

"We have all heard over the last several weeks about existing threats to the United States and steps need to be taken in order to maximize prevention and response capabilities. Of particular concern to the public and members of Congress is the threat of biological weapons. Democratic members of the Government Reform Committee have recognized the importance of this issue for some time. The events of the last two months clearly make today's briefing even more important."

"One ongoing theme we have heard from expert witnesses on the subject of preparing for threats that exist to the United States is that we lack a clear understanding of which threats are most likely to occur. Recent events underscore the need for such an assessment."

"We do know that biological weapons exist. We know that various states have had and may continue to have biological weapons programs. The threat of biological terror has become a reality for those of us on Capitol Hill and elsewhere. The question is to what extent and how do we best prepare for and attempt to prevent it."

"We need to take some immediate steps. And I am glad that today we have an opportunity to hear from experts about the significance of the Biological Weapons Convention."

"The United States must reengage and end its opposition to the establishment of a new inspection regime under the 1972 Biological Weapons Convention. In July, the National Security Subcommittee held hearings on the importance of this issue, and now it is certainly clear that we cannot afford to abandon our efforts because of pharmaceutical

industry concerns or difficulty in enforcing international principles on non-proliferation of biological weapons.[] []

"The United States has not gone far enough in its efforts to engage the international community on the issue of biological weapons production.[] Given the current situation, it is imperative for this Administration to redouble its efforts on this issue.[] There is no good reason to do otherwise.[] The international coalition that the Administration has assembled in the war on terrorism presents the Administration with a golden opportunity to make some real progress on this subject."